Profile

Paula Johnson

For Paula Johnson, theater has been a lifelong affair

One of the new members of the OLLI Advisory Board, Paula Johnson is adding her experience in the business world to its operation.

She is a native of “The County” (Aroostook to those of you from away) but grew up in Southern Maine when her family moved here for her mother’s health. While working full-time, she pursued her degree evenings at the Husson College Portland campus, where she earned a B.S in Business Administration and an M.S. in Business Management.

Paula’s love of the theater has been a lifelong affair, one that has been reinvigorated since she joined OLLI and its Senior Players.

Paula’s first encounter with the living theater was when she was a student at South Portland High School. “The Children’s Theatre of Portland recruited students to perform in their plays, such as King Midas and the Golden Touch and The Wizard of Oz. We performed at venues around the state, including Deering and South Portland High Schools, even touring to Union High School in Knox County. We were treated like stars in Union, and we were even asked for our autographs.”

That’s also when she learned the expression “break a leg,” used backstage among the actors because wishing good luck was considered bad luck. Paula also became involved with the Portland Players, both on the production end and as an actress. It was during a performance of Agatha Christie’s Ten Little Indians that she met her late husband, Bill.

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I just recently came across a course listing for fall 2001. This was the first term that I worked at OLLI. Traditionally, fall is the largest OLLI term of the year. At the time, it was the biggest term that had ever been offered, with 26 courses.

All classes were held on Fridays, with 13 in the morning and 13 in the afternoon. The maximum number of classes anyone could take was two, but many people only had the stamina to take one. Compare this to our upcoming Winter Term (traditionally our smallest term). We’re offering 29 courses, as well as three ongoing Writers’ Workshops.

We’ve come a long way in 10 years. Our membership has tripled; we now offer four terms a year (instead of just two); classes are held five (and sometimes six) days a week. We have expanded to include Special Interest Groups, Excursions, and Extended Travel. We have partnered with several USM departments and have collaborated with various USM and community groups to offer our members unique learning opportunities.

But through all the growth, we have remained a member-driven organization. Many, many people volunteer countless hours to OLLI. All of our faculty members and SAGE lecturers are volunteers, as are all committee members. Because of this volunteer base, OLLI is able to respond to the membership and keep the Institute vital and interesting.

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director of Program

Wrinkle in Time Quiz

Which of the following was first introduced to the American public at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair?

A. The Ferris Wheel
B. Belly dancing
C. Cracker Jacks
D. Heinz pickles
E. Souvenir postcards
F. The pay toilet
G. The zipper
H. Hamburgers
I. Carbonated soft drinks
J. All of the above

If you want to learn more about how the Chicago World’s Fair changed American life, join us for *A Wrinkle in Time: The Chicago World’s Fair* on March 6 to 8, 2012. Check the OLLI Winter Class Schedule for further information. Registration information will be available in January on the OLLI website and in the OLLI newsletter.

Answer to the above quiz is J.

*Reflections* seeks submissions

You can see your story, memoir, poem, artwork, or photograph in *Reflections*, OLLI’s annual journal of art and literature. Written works are limited to 1,000 words. The submission deadline is March 1, 2012, for publication at the beginning of the Fall term.

Pick up a submission form at the OLLI office. Send written works in electronic form to OLLI@usm.maine.edu, with *Reflections 2012* in the subject field. Linda Skinner, in the OLLI office, will handle e-mailed submissions. For visual works, e-mail or see Linda Skinner.
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OLLI members are invited to attend Advisory Board meetings, which usually take place on the second Friday of the month. Check with the OLLI office for time and place. Please contact the chair if you wish to address the Board.

WEB SITES
Maine Senior College Network
www.maineseniorcollege.org
OLLI National Resource Center
www.osher.net
OLLI at USM
www.usm.maine.edu/olli

OLLI NEWSLETTER
OLLI Office:
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Don King, Editor
Jo Morris, Layout Editor
Tim Baehr, Managing Editor

Please send newsletter material to the OLLI Office, via our e-mail. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month before the newsletter is published.

OLLI Advisory Board

This month I want to tell you about the value our many volunteers bring to making OLLI successful.

OLLI is driven to a large extent by the almost 200 volunteers we have serving in a variety of roles. They are faculty, who volunteer their time to provide us with great classroom experiences; the office volunteers, who help our outstanding OLLI/USM staff; the large number who serve on our standing committees; and those who don’t serve on committees but are always ready to pitch in and help when needed.

We recently had good examples of the volunteer spirit during the very successful OLLI book sale. Henry Warren’s Resource Development Committee took the lead on the sale, but a number of others volunteered their time to help make it a big success (almost $1,800 raised).

If you haven’t yet been involved as a volunteer and have an interest in doing so, stop by the OLLI office and make your interest known. It will be much appreciated, and you will have a rewarding experience.

—Dick Sturgeon Chair, OLLI Advisory Board

USM Calendar of Events offers OLLI members many choices

OLLI members are part of the University of Southern Maine family. Many of the events at both the Portland and Gorham campuses may be of interest to us.

Many events are free or available to OLLI members at senior admission rates.

For continuously updated USM news and events, simply click on the link or type www.usm.maine.edu/news into your browser’s address line.
Johnson (cont’d from page 1)

Family and a daughter interrupted her theatrical career, although she was regularly in the audience for the Portland Players, Lyric Theater, Portland Stage Company, and Good Theatre productions.

Paula worked for the Portland Pipe Line Corporation for 29 years, retiring as executive assistant to the president. She now works as an on-call branch office administrator for Edward Jones Financial Advisors.

Since retirement she has been active in several areas. She is a member of the Board of Managers at Seventy-Five State Street, an assisted living facility, and also of the board’s program committee, assisting in coordinating programs for the residents. She also directs Reader’s Theater for the Elders. “Several residents were OLLI members, and I decided to join.” In the past four years, she has taken several classes, including courses in history, jazz, films, and Irish short stories.

Paula says, “The Senior Players number 20 to 25 members, depending upon those attending each term. We pick pieces that we’d like to play and audition for director Jeffrey Roberts. He makes the choices in deciding what he thinks we could do best. Then we rehearse for the Ninth Week show.”

Paula represents the Players on the OLLI Community Committee, thus drawing the attention of Kathleen Sutherland, who persuaded her to seek to join the Advisory Board.

Paula believes her experiences in the business world can prove an asset. “I have good organizational skills that can be helpful in seeing things from a different perspective.”

—Don King

Great Courses available at OLLI

Explore more than 90 courses produced by The Teaching Company and donated by members. The courses are available at the OLLI office for use at home.

The courses are mainly on DVD or VHS but also include some audio cassettes.

The subjects include Philosophy and Psychology, Religion, Language, Science and Math, Technology and Medicine, Literature, History, Government, and Biography.

To see what’s available go to http://usm.maine.edu/olli/olliusm/ and click on The Great Courses.

You can sign out the courses you’re interested in and view them at your leisure.
Communications Committee News

[Editor’s note: This is the first in a series of reports on the OLLI Standing Committees.]

OLLI Newsletter, the OLLI website, The Maine Senior College Network Newsletter, Reflections. It’s a lot to keep track of for Communications Committee members. At our most recent meeting, we had a presentation by Rob Hyssong, our OLLI Program Coordinator. He guided us through a review of the OLLI website, including the on-line version of the OLLI Newsletter and the OLLI Catalog. We made some suggestions for changes, mostly about how some of the links work.

Many thanks to Rob for designing and implementing OLLI’s electronic face to the world!

OLLI Newsletter

Don King (Editor) keeps things going with his member profile and initial editing pass. Our cracker-jack Layout Editor, Jo Morris, has simplified the look and readability. And our great team of proofreader/copy-editors has ensured accuracy in grammar, spelling, and overall consistency: Laurie Jensen, Joan Kushner, Ann Landsberg, and John Sutherland. Joan Aldrich has helped out for a couple of issues, too.

OLLI Website

Check out the website at http://usm.maine.edu/olli (click or type the address into your browser.) The QUICK LINKS column on the right is a great place to start.

OLLI Courses and Lectures takes you the latest course catalog, a registration page, and the SAGE brochure. Past catalogs and SAGE brochures are listed here, too.

OLLI Events is listed twice - one link takes you to a list of upcoming events for the month. The other link takes you to the same events in a calendar-grid format.

OLLI Newsletter takes you to this newsletter, with all the pictures in full color and all the clickable links “live.”

Handy hint: If you want a paper version of the catalog, SAGE brochure, or OLLI Newsletter, just print it out on your printer.

MSCN Newsletter

Joan Aldrich has published one article, and is preparing another. This is our first OLLI presence in the statewide Senior College newsletter; many thanks to Joan for taking this on.

Reflections

The committee — Dominica Cipollone, Claire Knox, Linda McLoon, Jean Sheridan, and Edith Yovan, are eagerly awaiting your submissions of poetry, art, photos, memoirs, and fiction for the 2012 issue. Deadline is March, and you can pick up a submission form in the OLLI office.

—Tim Baehr, Chair
Photos from 9th week performances

Helene Quint in “Tin of Tube Rose.”

Bob and Jean Cash with Denise Dreher in “Surprise.”

Faith Varney directs the OLLI Singers

Marcia Leonard as an embittered widow in “Grief.”

Paula Johnson, David Murray and Charlotte Price in “Canker Sores and Other Distractions” in their OLLI Senior Players skit.
OLLI Ski Club members optimistic about December

OLLI Ski Club members eagerly await the first ski club dates of the current season.

Downhill skiers will head to Sunday River on Wednesday, Dec. 21. Contact Steve Donahoe at stevedonahoe1@gmail.com or 239-6517.

Cross-country skiers will have a standing date every Friday throughout the winter, weather permitting. Our season begins at Riverside Golf Course in Portland on Friday, Dec. 23, and LL Bean Fogg House on Friday, Dec. 30. Contact Bev Blair at bblair@maine.rr.com or 799-5043.

An early January trip to Shawnee for Carload Day ($84) on Monday, Jan. 9, is also in the works. Contact Susan Gilpin at 310-0329 or susanogilpin@gmail.com. Ski event dates depend on weather conditions, so be sure to sign up in order to get updates and carpool info.

Ski Club members will next meet on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at 11:45 a.m. in the Wishcamper second floor lounge. Attendance is optional; all communications will be sent out via e-mail. To join the Ski Club’s Member Directory, drop an e-mail to stevedonahoe1@gmail.com or call 239-6517.

Do you like to dance?

If so, Griff Matthews would like to meet with OLLI members to discuss the 1950s, when he recalls dancing with his fiancée at the Military Ball at the University of Pittsburgh to the music of the Glenn Miller Band.

Matthews would like to meet with those interested at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 14, in room 207 at Wishcamper. This could be a single meeting or the beginning of a Special Interest Group.

He can be reached at 776-9821.

OLLI TRAVEL 2012

The OLLI Extended Travel Committee has chosen four possible destinations for November 2012.

We would like to hear from interested members. Please tell us which locations you would prefer. We are working with travel companies and would like the trip cost to include airfare, taxes, fuel surcharges, hotel and meals, and trip insurance — in other words, we want the price to include everything so there are no surprise add-ons.

We are aiming for a cost of $3,000 per person based on double occupancy. The trip lengths we have selected for you to choose from vary from 7 to 15 days.

The locations we have chosen are as follows:

- London/Paris – seven days, six nights
- Costa Rica – nine days
- Cuba – 10 days
- Panama Canal Cruise – 15 days including canal transit.

Please let us know which of these trips would interest you. You may choose one or rank them 1 to 4. You are only expressing a preference; you are not making a commitment to travel at this time.

You can vote by stopping at the volunteer desk in the OLLI office or online by clicking http://tinyurl.com/OLLI-trav or copying this link and pasting it into your browser. You can also visit the OLLI website at http://www.usm.maine.edu/olli and clicking on the OLLI Travel Survey 2012 link on the right.

Walking Club and OLLI Night Out

These clubs will not be meeting this month. The Walking Club will resume in January and OLLI Night Out will begin again in February.
Now Appearing

The NEW OLLI Creative Arts Gallery

(Second floor — Wishcamper)

Currently showing are works by the OLLI Creative Arts Committee.

To Participate — by hanging your work, or by working with us in any creative way you may conjure or suggest, contact us.

Included works could be paintings, drawings, photographs, fiber arts and more.

Contact Information is on the gallery wall and in the OLLI Office.

Exhibits will hang for a full semester.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts, suggestions, and opinions, and to adding your name to the growing list of upcoming exhibitors.